

not on our side; we cannot afford to delay any longer or defer to the obstructionist tactics of brutal regimes. The people of Sudan deserve more than our outrage; they deserve our action. And the time to act is now.

#### THE NEED FOR REAUTHORIZATION OF PUBLIC LAW 106-393

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, I rise to make a few comments regarding the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act, or County Payments Act as it has been nicknamed.

Today is a sad day for the 780 counties that benefit from the County Payments Act because with the last day of this fiscal year, the act expires.

In 2000, the Congress passed Public Law 106-393 to address the needs of the forest counties of America and to focus on creating a new cooperative partnership between citizens in forest counties and our Federal land management to develop forest health improvement projects on public lands and simultaneously stimulate job development and community economic stability.

The act has been an enormous success in achieving and even surpassing the goals of Congress. This act has restored programs for students in rural schools and prevented the closure of numerous isolated rural schools. It has been a primary funding mechanism to provide rural school students with educational opportunities comparable to suburban and urban students. Over 4,400 rural schools receive funds because of this act.

Next, the act has allowed rural county road districts and county road departments to address the severe maintenance backlog. Snow removal has been restored for citizens, tourists, and school buses. Bridges have been upgraded and replaced and culverts that are hazardous to fish passage have been upgraded and replaced.

In addition, over 70 Resource Advisory Committees, or RACs have been formed. These RACs cover our largest 150 forest counties. Nationally these 15-person diverse RAC stakeholder committees have studied and approved over 2,500 projects on Federal forestlands and adjacent public and private lands. These projects have addressed a wide variety of improvements drastically needed on our national forests. Projects have included fuels reduction, habitat improvement, watershed restoration, road maintenance and rehabilitation, reforestation, campground and trail improvement, and noxious weed eradication.

RACs are a new and powerful partnership between county governments and the land management agencies. They are rapidly building the capacity for collaborative public land management decisionmaking in over 150 of our largest forest counties in America and are reducing the gridlock over public land management, community by community.

The legacy of this act over the last few years is positive and substantial. This law should be extended so it can continue to benefit the forest counties, their schools, and continue to contribute to improving the health of our national forests.

If we do not work to reauthorize this act, all of the progress of the last 6 years will be lost. Schools in timber-dependent communities will lose a substantial part of their funding. These school districts will have to start making tough budget decisions such as keeping or canceling after school programs, sports programs, music programs, and trying to determine what is the basic educational needs of our children. Next, counties will have to reprioritize road maintenance so that only the essential services of the county are met because that is all they will be able to afford.

Thirty of our colleagues have joined Mr. WYDEN and myself in recognizing the importance of the reauthorization of this act by cosponsoring S. 267. And while we have run out of time in this fiscal year, I look forward to working with my colleagues in the lameduck session to address this issue.

#### REMEMBERING NATIONAL PUBLIC LANDS DAY

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, on September 30, will once again observe National Public Lands Day. For the 13th straight year, thousands of citizens across the country help clean up public parks, rivers, lakes, forests, rangelands, and beaches. These volunteers will hit the ground running and spruce up trails, build bridges, plant trees, and much more. I commend each and everyone of them for their important public service. Their work inspires us to step back and consider just what our public lands mean to us.

Almost 100 years ago, the great conservationist President Teddy Roosevelt addressed a special session of Congress on the subject of our natural resources and spoke words that should be listened to carefully by everyone who has an interest in keeping the United States the most prosperous and dynamic nation on the face of the Earth. "These resources, which form the common basis of our welfare, can be wisely developed, rightly used, and prudently conserved only by the common action of all the people . . ." Listen to those words and notice the wise approach of a man considered one of our most radical conservationists, a President who put 234 million acres into the public trust. This is not a man who lived on the ideological extremes. He did not advocate roping off all the land and allowing no admittance. Nor would he stand by and let the land be ransacked and misused. Let me speak again his words: ". . . wisely developed, rightly used, and prudently conserved . . ." That approach was correct in 1909, and it is the right one now.

Today's younger generation understands that our natural resources are

not limitless, that we can not endlessly exploit them. They are more environmentally savvy perhaps than their parents. And I believe they also grasp the need for smart conservation, for devising collaborative policies that ensure public access to public land now and in the future.

Some lands ought to have restrictions on use. I do not dispute that, and I do not advocate any careless "rollback" of environmental regulations. But this is not a time to exact an economic toll on our country by ignoring the resources available for use in our public lands. It is a time to tap into our ingenuity and devise ways to utilize them while responsibly mitigating any environmental impact. This is not an insurmountable challenge; Americans have accomplished more difficult tasks in our history.

Lastly, I would like to emphasize the issue of public ownership. These lands are owned by the people. We policymakers need to always keep that in mind and not just pay this fact lip-service. National Public Lands Day is a perfect time to remind ourselves who owns this land. We must be flexible with the different types of recreation and access to public land that people want.

Mr. President, in closing, let me add that Americans have always had a strong relationship with public lands and have always understood the need to preserve them for posterity. Sometimes we hear it said that people only care for what they themselves privately owned that what is held in common will often fall into disrepair. The work that will be accomplished this September 30th disproves that idea. And I am optimistic that future generations will be enjoying the same public lands we do today.

#### NOMINATION OF RICHARD HOAGLAND

Mr. ENSIGN. Mr. President, I rise to speak today about an issue of great importance to the Armenian community, the nomination of Richard Hoagland to be the next U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Armenia.

I respect the office of the President and the powers that are granted to appoint individuals that are in support of the administration's agenda; however, there is justifiable concern about the recall of our Ambassador to a regionally important country and the subsequent nomination of his replacement. The reported reason for the recall of Ambassador Evans revolves around the failure of our Government to officially recognize the Armenian genocide. That is unacceptable.

Once again, I want to go on record as being opposed to the continued denial of the Armenian genocide. The bigger issue is not that of an appointment of this or any official who recognizes his duties and will be diligent in carrying them out but of acknowledging the genocide as part of an appropriate foreign policy.